

5.8 Summary

- Riverside County must adopt a hazard mitigation plan acceptable to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) if it is to receive facilities restoration assistance authorized under Section 409 of the Stafford Act. In recent disasters, FEMA has recognized Safety Elements of California local governments as fulfilling Section 409 hazard mitigation plan requirements.
- Natural disasters are currently under-insured, and government assistance is incomplete. Insurers face many uncertainties with natural hazards coverage and have been resistant to supplying it. Instead, they have lobbied the government to create a Federally-sponsored reinsurance pool for earthquakes, to spread earthquake disaster costs over more manageable lengths of time and payees.
- The County has available a range of disincentives to unsafe development and incentives to mitigate natural and structural hazards. The choice of particular disincentives and incentives will depend on the direction and character of public safety policies adopted in the Safety Element. The most effective approach will probably be to use several in concert. Each has relative advantages and disadvantages, which must be weighed before implementation of them as a package.
- Digitized in an integrated GIS database, Safety Element hazard data provide a mechanism to: 1) present selected information at a variety of scales and formats; 2) facilitate availability of identical databases to all interested agencies, from a planning agency issuing permits, to a fire department accessing hazardous materials business emergency plans; 3) simplify update of the database with new information, such as newly identified or mitigated hazardous buildings, changes in occupancy of dependent facilities, or current river levels; and, 4) create an interactive, on-line emergency management GIS for use in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction.
- An emergency management GIS system will be most useful to the widest array of County and other users if users are fully consulted in the system's formation and prioritization. This system can be further enhanced by data sharing and database development with regional entities, other local governments, and private organizations such as utilities. This will minimize costs and accelerate GIS development.
- Hazard overlay zones can be controversial but are a proven method of isolating and systematically dealing with problem areas. When evaluated from the standpoint of

their prime purpose -- enhancement of public safety -- they provide a reasonable and equitable means of creating safer development and reducing hazards. Their prospective application and utility in Riverside County will be dependent upon the general thrust and character of policy in the revised Safety Element. Like all mitigation techniques, overlay zones are not perfect nor all-encompassing. They should be viewed as one in a group of useful hazard reduction tools, which together can strengthen safety and reduce the chance of unnecessary loss of life and property.

- Pre-event planning for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction is strongly advised. Emergency and disaster management literature, reflecting the experiences of communities around the world, demonstrate common patterns of recovery activity that can be fashioned into preventative planning. In preparing a Safety Element for adoption, Riverside County is well positioned to shape the overall directions of future recovery planning and action. A Recovery and Reconstruction Ordinance would be a solid step toward a comprehensive disaster preparedness, response and recovery program.